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von Thünen, the failure to estimate the strength of the movement (called the latest development of German wage theory) headed by Schulze-Gaevernitz, or even to name his coworkers, the absence of any word concerning the position of many contemporary writers who occupy high places in the German economic world, and above all the total silence concerning the existence or significance of incipient movements in German theory that are plainly visible. One feels also the lack of a summarizing chapter dealing with the general characteristics of German wage thought, pointing out the general relations internally, between the different groups, and externally, between German and English theory, and furnishing some criticism and estimate of the work of the Germans as a whole. The usefulness of the monograph would be increased by the addition of an index.

ROBERT F. HOXIE.

A History of the English Poor Law, in Connection with the State of the Country and the Condition of the People. By SIR GEORGE NICHOLLS, Poor Law Commissioner and Secretary to the Poor Law Board. New edition, with a Biography by H. G. WILLINK, Chairman Bradfield Poor Law Union. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons; London: P. S. King & Son, 1898. 2 vols. 8vo, pp. lxxviii + 384 and viii + 460.

THE appearance of a new edition of Nicholls's *History of the English Poor Law* is justified by the importance of the work itself, and by the present active scientific and popular interest in the subject with which it deals. The title is familiar to all who have occupied themselves with questions of public relief to the poor, but the work has been accessible to few. The substantial edition which the publishers have here offered to the public will be heartily welcome to many students. In binding, and paper, and print, the work is most satisfactory.

The author was a man of wide experience in several lines, and yet by nature not a tinker but most thorough. He was born in 1781, and after sound elementary schooling he entered the service of the East India Company at the age of sixteen. The next eighteen years he spent on the sea, and after serving several years as captain of a merchantman he retired to a country place in 1816. Three years later he purchased a small property in the country parish of Southwell

and, not being in active business, he accepted the office of overseer. In this capacity he instituted some practical reforms in the methods of relief of the poor, with most beneficial results. His pamphlet, *Eight Letters of an Overseer*, in which, in 1821, the lessons of this experience were presented, was his first contribution to the literature of the subject. He then engaged successively in a large engineering enterprise, and in the management of the branch of the Bank of England at Birmingham. He was evidently a wise and capable man of affairs. Meantime he did not lose his interest in the subject of poor relief, and when the Act of 1834 was passed, creating the Poor Law Commission, he was appointed one of its members. From that time, until compelled by failing health to retire in 1851, he was uninterruptedly engaged in this work of the national control of the system of poor relief. He was knighted and pensioned for his distinguished services, and immediately on his retirement, at the age of sixty-nine, he began the preparation of this work, his chief literary monument. It appears from the date of the dedication to have been published first in 1860.

His purpose was to write a complete and thorough history of English legislation upon the subject in question, one which would be at once the final authority on the past and a guide in all future legislation. In this aim he succeeded in a more than ordinary degree. The reader feels a certain disappointment in some features and in the omission of others. Yet these are defects which must be anticipated, for the peculiar nature of the author's training and the limitations in it, must inevitably be reflected in his treatment of such a subject. There is, for example, a lack of breadth in the grasp of the historical bearings of the subject, for this only a wider study would have given. The author professes to be writing the history of the poor law "in connection with the state of the country and the condition of the people." This historical setting consists, however, of little more than quotations from a few of the more popular secondary authorities such as Hume, Macauley, and the *Pictorial History of England*, and the main source drawn upon is the preambles of the acts themselves. Instead of the more vital details which we should like to see, are given copious extracts from the acts regulating foreign commerce, a general review of the various reigns such as is contained in any elementary English history, and discussions of such questions as free trade and the Protestant Reformation.

On the other hand, one finds in Sir George Nicholls's treatment

the virtues of his defects. His grasp of the practical aspects of the poor law as he had known it is shown on every page where he comments on the legislation of the past. Two or three leading ideas he holds to, firmly, from first to last. He is methodical as a man of business usually is, and a scholar should be. He observes admirably the chronological sequence of his narrative. Omitting the details above referred to there remains a faithfully compiled, well-ordered body of extracts from all the leading acts bearing upon the subject. He is fair minded in an admirable degree. His general point of view is, of course, that of the *bourgeoisie* and the socialist will find much to deride in it. It must be confessed that the good Sir George's comments are at times guileless. Speaking of the reported execution of seventy-two thousand criminals in the reign of Henry VIII he adds: "The moral condition of the people must have been low indeed, to render such a sacrifice of life at the shrine of justice necessary for the protection of property." But despite the author's conservatism, his evident reverence for the English crown and church, he appears to be in general both sympathetic and judicial in his views of the poorer classes and their claims.

The last half of the second volume is taken up with an account of the operations of the Poor Law Commission and Board from 1834 to 1853. Here the author's personal experience and interest are greatest. They lead him into detailed discussions which have been thrown somewhat out of focus by the forty years that have elapsed since they were written. Yet the hard-headedness, the concreteness, the strong conviction of his argument, make this still valuable to the student of the present day problem of poor relief.

The author expresses the opinion that "the social condition and general weal of a people will in great measure depend" (Vol. I, p. 15) on the mode in which relief is administered. Certainly this has been the case in England, and the same thing may be seen to be true, in a minor degree, in every neighborhood in America. There appears to be in every community a continual struggle between opposing principles of relief, and now the amount increases and again diminishes according as sympathy or economy, or heedlessness or self-seeking gain in force. This book has still a practical and present interest, for "old fallacies have been revived" (as the biographer remarks, p. lxxvii) and some of the questions apparently settled when it was written are again being reargued. The third, or supplemental volume, which is

promised to appear at the end of the present year is to come from the pen of Mr. T. Mackay. It will bring the history down to date. If its merits are as great and its defects no greater than those of the present work, it will be interesting, valuable, and most welcome.

FRANK A. FETTER.

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Les Français d'aujourd'hui: les types sociaux du Midi et du Centre.

Par EDMOND DEMOLINS. Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1898. (No date). 12mo, pp. xii+465.

TO ATTEMPT a description of the social geography of France is the avowed object of the author of this present work. It deals with the south and the center, the northern third being reserved for future treatment in a second volume. This one concerns itself with the land tenures especially; together with the influence exerted by these, in connection with the physical environment upon the customs, habits, and temperament of the peasantry. Arthur Young did this for us many years ago in an almost inimitable way. M. Baudrillard has done it more recently for the Institut; and the work of de Foville has covered independently much the same field. Frequent reference to the former occurs in this volume; but the admirable report of the Ministère de l'Instruction Publique, in 1894, seems to have been overlooked, as well as the original work of the great *Enquêtes Agricoles*. On the other hand many interesting generalizations have been drawn from the data here presented. Once in a while these seem to have required a bit of mental ingenuity to bring them into entire harmony with the laws of Le Play's *social system*; but on the whole a step toward the digestion of a great inchoate mass of facts has been well taken. In this sense the book is a distinct contribution; it contains much that the student of populations cannot fail to find suggestive. To venture an adverse criticism, the author seems not to be acquainted with the rich statistical materials available for this country. Perhaps the neglect of it, in favor of the system of minute description by local observers, has been intentional; this mode of treatment here adopted is always bound to serve as an admirable corrective of mere statistical generalizations. Both, in fact, are necessary; and for this very reason the book in its neglect of statistics, especially in their graphic application, seems to be defective.